



# A Few Good Lobbyists

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, July 09, 2007

## City Hall Diary

As many of you know, the San Jose City Council is on recess for the month of July. Therefore, I thought I would share something lighthearted with you.

"Monday Night Live," a comic theater production by the San Jose Stage Company, is an ongoing tradition for some. The yearly event started about ten years ago and depicts well known San Jose officials in a comical manner. The event acts as a fundraiser for the theater company and mimics the TV show, "Saturday Night Live." "Monday Night Live" can be very sarcastic, silly and even self-deprecating. I was asked to participate this year as an Italian (what an original idea) in a "Sopranos" skit.

The theme of the production this year was lobbyists. Worth noting is that the person behind "Monday Night Live" is none other than the front-man lobbyist himself, Jerry Strangis. If you remember, I don't like lobbyists (smile). Rather, I don't like what lobbyists have done, so I was excited to participate in this "let's rip on lobbyists' comedy."

I love theater in my own right and enjoy movies old and new. One of my favorite movie scenes was in "A Few Good Men," where Jack Nicholson and Tom Cruise exchange words at the trial on the witness stand.

My imagination got the best of me. I was thinking about this scene and decided to put words to paper. I took the scene and rewrote it, modifying the words in the original dialogue to a courtroom exchange about lobbyists between Allen Ruby—the attorney for ex-Mayor Ron Gonzales—and me.

Here is my rewrite:

ALLEN RUBY: I would like an answer to the question Judge.  
Councilman Oliverio . . . you made the call. You Placed the Order. You

personally gave approval and made it happen. Councilman Oliverio, did you place the order?

OLIVERIO: I'll answer the question. You want answers?

ALLEN RUBY: I think I'm entitled to them.

OLIVERIO: You want answers?

ALLEN RUBY: I want the truth!

OLIVERIO: You can't handle the truth! Allen, we live in a city that has walls. And those walls have to be guarded from lobbyists. Who's going to do it? You? Les White? Rick Doyle? I have a greater responsibility than you can possibly fathom. You weep for Ron Gonzales and you curse SanJoseInside. You have that luxury. You have the luxury of not knowing what I know: that the downfall of Tony Arreola and Sean Kali-Rai, while tragic, probably saved San Jose's remaining industrial lands. And my existence, while grotesque and incomprehensible to you, saves Coyote Valley from development . . . You don't want the truth. Because deep down, in places you don't talk about at the Chamber and Labor Temple, you want me on that wall. You need me on that wall.

We use words like "no bundling of checks," "no back door meetings," "clean money" . . . we use these words as the backbone to a life spent defending something. You use 'em as a punch line. I have neither the time nor the inclination to explain myself to a man who rises and sleeps under the blanket of the Reed Reforms I provide, then questions the manner in which I provide it! I'd rather you just said "thank you" and went on your way. Otherwise, I suggest you pick up a checkbook and write me a check for \$250. Either way, I don't give a damn what you think you're entitled to!

ALLEN RUBY: Did you order the blow-up doll to Jerry Strangis's house?

OLIVERIO: I did the job the people sent me to do.

ALLEN RUBY: Did you order the blow-up doll?

OLIVERIO: You're goddamn right I did!

My script wasn't used; however, I stand by it.

Have a good week.

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